

ABC NIGHTLINE  
16 August 1983

DOWNS: Good evening. I'm Hugh Downs, and this is Nightline.... Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie. U.S. Army officers helped him avoid prosecution, but why? We'll talk with the man who headed a Justice Department investigation, with an intelligence officer who dealt with Barbie and the man who tracked him down in South America and ....

DOWNS: Thank you very much, Dr. Frank. We're going to turn next to the case of Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo officer now on trial now in France for crimes against humanity during World War II. The United States today apologized to French authorities for concealing Barbie's whereabouts for decades. We'll talk with a U.S. official about the case. And later tonight, we'll look at a controversial plan to capture 100 killer whales in the Pacific for research and display.

DOWNS: When Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie was found in Bolivia and extradited to France last January, some very unpleasant stories began to surface. According to some reports, U.S. Army officers had recruited Barbie for intelligence work after World War II and had shielded him from prosecution for war crimes. The Justice Department began an investigation in March, and today the results of that investigation were released along with word that the United States has sent an apology to the government of France. Here is correspondent John Martin with a report on Klaus Barbie and his relationship with the United States.

MARTIN: Klaus Barbie, a bright young man in Hitler's Germany before the war. Klaus Barbie, a police intelligence officer for the Gestapo during the war, winner of the Iron Cross and other medals, arrested as a neo-Nazi in 1946. Klaus Barbie, a family man traveling to Bolivia in 1951, under the name 'Altmann.' Klaus Barbie, for three decades as Altmann, living the life of lumber merchant, quinine exporter and shipping executive in a South American country hungry for skilled immigrants. Klaus Barbie, accused Nazi war criminal, under arrest seven months ago and on his way to France, where he is expected to stand trial sometime next spring. ALLAN RYAN, JR. (Special U.S. Prosecutor): Barbie was recruited by counter-intelligence agents of the United States Army in April, 1947, in Munich, Germany. He was employed and paid by the Army continuously until February, 1981.

MARTIN: Today, after six months of investigation, the American Justice Department released a report that describes still another Klaus Barbie, American spy recruiter in Germany in the early Cold War between 1947 and 1951, a cunning informant who boasted of penetrating French intelligence and Soviet operations in West Germany and a man for whom at least seven or more U.S. Army officers lied to the State Department to protect him from extradition to France for trial on alleged war crimes. The report, compiled by a team of special investigators inside the Justice Department says the Army officers obstructed justice to protect U.S. spy operations, shielding Barbie from the French and then spiriting him away to Bolivia through a top secret operation called "Rap Lines. The report concludes that at first Army counter-intelligence innocently recruited Barbie in 1947, unaware of his alleged role in Lyon, France, in the deaths of more than 4,000 French Jews and Resistance fighters. The report also says investigators found no evidence Barbie ever again worked for American intelligence in the 32 years he spent in South America. When special prosecutor Allan Ryan visited Bolivia in April, he found Interior Ministry records missing but was told by officials of two regimes that in 1975 Barbie had passed information to the CIA through intermediaries in the ministry. GUSTAVO SANCHEZ (Bolivian Interior Ministry) (Voice of Translator): That he visited the U.S. Embassy, that he had contact with people at the embassy, that he had relationships with people at the embassy, that is true. It was obvious that the contacts at the embassy were to transmit information.

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